

Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity

Overview

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service

Funding Opportunity Title: AmeriCorps State Planning Grants

Announcement Type: Amended announcement. Initially issued August 31, 2010
Corrected October 25, 2010

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: 94.006

Dates: Applications are due **September 28, 2012** at 4:00 p.m. Central Time. Successful applicants will be notified by October 19, 2012.

Overview:

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. For more than 15 years, the Corporation—through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs—has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

On April 21, 2009, President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, the most sweeping expansion of national service in a generation. This landmark law not only expands service opportunities, but also focuses national service on key outcomes; builds the capacity of individuals, nonprofits, and communities to succeed; and encourages innovative approaches to solving problems.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. What is the purpose of AmeriCorps State Planning Grants? The purpose of planning grants is to support the development of AmeriCorps programs so applicants are better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle. Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps planning grantees will engage in 6 months of planning in order to apply for an AmeriCorps grant in the following year.

B. What are the 2011 AmeriCorps State funding priorities?

1. Focus Areas and National Performance Measures

As in 2010, in the 2011 competition the Corporation expects to invest a significant amount of available funding to programs working in the six Focus Areas of **Disaster Services, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, Opportunity, and Veterans and Military Families.**

Volunteer Louisiana will pursue a balanced portfolio across the Focus Areas, and other considerations outlined below in **Section VI. B.**

What are the goals of the review and selection process? Brief descriptions of the six Focus Areas follow:

Disaster Services:

Grants in the Disaster Services Focus Area will help communities with disaster mitigation, preparation, response and recovery. In order to be considered aligned with this Focus Area, applicants must submit self-identified performance measures that demonstrate community and member impacts as they relate to one or more of the functional aspects of disaster services. The application instructions include definitions and examples for each of the functional areas. The measures identified by successful applicants through this *Notice* will inform the development of national disaster services performance measures in future years.

Education:

Grants in the Education Focus Area will include programs that seek to contribute to the number of students who graduate from high school and college or university. In order to achieve that goal, the Corporation seeks to increase its investment in national service programs that improve academic outcomes for young children, youth, and young adults, particularly those in the lowest-performing schools. Specifically, the Corporation seeks research- and evidence-based programs that help children and youth prepare for school; perform at grade-level; graduate from high school ready for college, work, and life; and succeed in college and university through academic engagement and civic participation.

Environmental Stewardship:

Grants in the Environmental Stewardship Focus Area will include programs that protect human health and the health of ecosystems by conserving natural resources and restoring the nation's air, water, and land. Environmental Stewardship programs may include activities that encourage organizations and individuals to use energy efficiently and utilize cost-effective renewable energy technologies; minimize waste disposal; restore watersheds and aquatic ecosystems; improve at-risk public use lands; restore critical wildlife habitat; increase soil stabilization and quality; mitigate the environmental consequences of disasters; and promote environmental sustainability.

Healthy Futures:

Grants in the Healthy Futures Focus Area will meet health needs within communities including access to care, aging in place, and addressing childhood obesity. Access to care is broadly defined and may include health insurance, culturally appropriate health care interventions, transportation, language translation, access to disease and disability prevention, health promotion initiatives, health literacy and efforts to address health disparities. Grants may support older adults, homebound individuals and disabled individuals with activities such as food delivery, transportation or other services that allow them to live independently, including evidence-based programs supported by other partner agencies such as the U. S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Veterans Affairs. The Corporation seeks to fund programs that target risk factors for childhood obesity, including poor nutrition and physical inactivity, and that reflect the recommendations of the National Prevention Council and the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity.

Opportunity:

Grants in the Opportunity Focus Area will meet the needs of economically vulnerable Americans, their families and their communities. Opportunity programs may include activities that assist individuals and families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness; provide financial literacy training and tools designed to improve financial security; and expand employment possibilities. Opportunity

programs include those that engage economically vulnerable Americans as AmeriCorps members leading to positive employment and/or educational outcomes. The Corporation will also support programs that undertake community-based strategies to redevelop local areas that are struggling with under-investment and other barriers to economic opportunity.

Veterans and Military Families:

Grants in the Veterans and Military Families Focus Area will meet the needs of veterans and family members of active duty and deployed military personnel. Veterans and Military Families programs may include activities in the areas of health, education and economic opportunity, including the elimination of veteran homelessness, educational programs for children in military families, and economic opportunities for military spouses and veterans. The Corporation is also interested in supporting programs that target disadvantaged, homeless, or formerly homeless veterans and programs that align with the efforts of the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Affairs, Labor, Defense, and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

II. Award Information

A. How much funding is available?

Planning grants applicants may apply for up to a maximum of \$50,000.

B. When will the grants be awarded?

Volunteer Louisiana will award grants following the grant selection announcement. We anticipate announcing the results of this competition by no later than October 19, 2012.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Who is eligible for this funding?

1. AmeriCorps State Planning Grants

Public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); Indian Tribes; labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and intermediaries planning to subgrant funds awarded are encouraged to apply. Organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this *Notice*.

Planning grant applicants must not have previously received an AmeriCorps State grant. Applicants may have received funding through Learn and Serve America, NCCC, Senior Corps, or VISTA.

B. What are the matching requirements for these grants?

Applicants must provide 24% of the total project cost in match. Match may be cash or in-kind.

IV. Application and Submission Instructions

A. What do I need to do before I apply?

1. Notice of Intent to Apply

Applicants are encouraged to send an e-mail by September 21, 2012 to strahan@crt.la.gov stating intent to apply.

Although submission of the Notice of Intent is not mandatory, submitting it will help the Volunteer

Louisiana plan more efficiently for review. Include the name of the applicant organization, address, contact person, and phone number in the Notice of Intent.

2. Universal Identifier

Applications must include a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with the Central Contractor's Registry (CCR). **The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number.**

DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. The website indicates a 24- hour e-mail turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, **we suggest registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date.** Expedited DUNS numbers may be obtained by following instructions found here: <http://smallbusiness.dnb.com/establish-your-business/12334338-1.html>.

CCR is the primary registrant database for the U.S. Federal Government. CCR collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of Federal agency contracts, grant awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of federal assistance. All Corporation recipients are required to maintain a valid registration, which must be renewed annually.

We urge applicants that are not already registered with the CCR to begin the registration process immediately in order to avoid any delays in submitting applications. Applicants must have a DUNS number in order to register with the CCR. It typically takes 3-5 days to finalize CCR registration. To register online go to www.bpn.gov/CCR.

B. What is the Content and Form of the Application Submission?

1. Submitting in eGrants

The Corporation requires that all applicants submit applications electronically via the Corporation's web-based application system, [eGrants](#). Applications must arrive at the Corporation by September 28, 2012 at 4 p.m. CST in order to be considered. Volunteer Louisiana reserves the right to extend the submission deadline. Any notice of such extended deadline will be sent by email to all who submitted an Intent to Apply.

We recommend that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application as soon as possible, even if the organization does not apply. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the document into.

Contact the eGrants Help Desk at 888-677-7849 if a problem arises while creating an account, preparing, or submitting an application. Be prepared to provide the application ID. eGrants Help Desk hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET Monday through Friday.

If technical issues will prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, please contact the eGrants Help Desk prior to the deadline to explain the technical issue and receive a ticket number. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, the applicant must continue working with the eGrants Help Desk to submit via eGrants.

2. Late Applications

The Corporation may consider an application after the deadline, but only if the applicant submits a letter explaining the extenuating circumstance which caused the delay. The letter must be sent tostrahan@crt.la.gov within the 24-hour period following the deadline. Late applications are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

3. Character Limits

In eGrants, applicants will enter text for

- Executive Summary: Maximum 500 characters (a brief paragraph, about a quarter-page).
- Program Design.
- Organizational Capability.
- Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

You may not exceed 30,000 characters, or about 15 double spaced pages in the Narratives, including the Executive Summary. The character count includes spaces and punctuation. Reviewers will not consider material submitted over the character limits.

C. Funding Restrictions

Grants under this program are subject to the applicable Cost Principles under OMB Circulars A21 (2 CFR part 220), A-122 (2 CFR part 230), or A-87 (2 CFR part 225) and the Uniform Administrative Requirements for grants under A-102 (45 CFR part 2541) or A-110 (45 CFR 2543 or 2 CFR part 21).

D. Other Submission Requirements

Equal Opportunity Survey. Applicants are asked to complete the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. Applicants may complete the survey in eGrants while preparing the application for submission or contact the Corporation to obtain a hard copy.

V. Application Review Information

A. What are the Selection Criteria?

In evaluating applications for funding, staff reviewers will assess Program Design (50%), Organizational Capability (25%), and Cost-effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25%). Staff reviewers will assess application narratives against these criteria and weight them accordingly.

B. What are the goals of the review and selection process?

The Corporation's review and selection process is designed to:

- Give every eligible application full and fair consideration.
- Select a high-quality, well-balanced portfolio of grantees that will engage in 6 months of planning in order to apply for an AmeriCorps State grant in the following year.

Specifically, the review and selection process is designed to:

1. Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:

- **High-quality response to criteria.**
- **Priorities, in the order of preference outlined in Section B, above.**
- **Strategic Characteristics:**
 - o Expanding opportunities to serve; particularly for new Americans, low-income individuals, rural residents, older Americans, veterans, members of faith-based organizations, communities of color, Native Americans, and people with

disabilities.

o Building capacity for individuals, nonprofits and communities to solve problems. o

Embracing innovative approaches to solving problems.

2. Compile a balanced portfolio based on the following characteristics:

- Geographic representation.
 - Equitable treatment of rural and urban communities.
- Involvement of underserved and economically disadvantaged communities.

C. What are the stages in the review and selection process?

1. Compliance Review

Volunteer Louisiana staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. Applications that are submitted by eligible organizations, submitted by the deadline, and that are complete, will advance to Internal Review.

2. Internal Review

Volunteer Louisiana staff will assess Program Design; Organizational Capability; and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy. Following staff assessment, some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information. Clarification information is used by staff in making final recommendations. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for information in a timely fashion will result in the removal of applications from consideration. Volunteer Louisiana staff will determine which applications to recommend for selection based on the results of Internal Review, and Clarification; and the priorities, balancing characteristics, additional considerations, and strategic characteristics listed above.

3. Selection

The Volunteer Louisiana staff will select the final portfolio based on review and considering overall quality, priorities, balancing characteristics, additional considerations, and strategic characteristics listed above.

D. How long will the selection and review process take?

Processing and selecting applications for funding will require approximately 4 weeks.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. When will grants be awarded?

The Corporation will award grants following the grant selection announcement. We anticipate announcing the results of this competition by no later than October 19, 2012.

B. What is the project period for these grants?

The project period for these grants is 6 months. **The project start date may not occur prior to the date the Corporation awards the grant, and is projected to be January 1, 2013.**

C. What documents govern the grant?

The AmeriCorps regulations and grant provisions are incorporated in the Notice of Grant Award. The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant.

D. What are the reporting requirements for these grants?

Grantees are required to provide annual performance and bi-annual financial reports. All grantees provide monthly expense reports to Volunteer Louisiana via the online reporting system.

If you receive an award, you will be required to report at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over \$25,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for your organization. You must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See 2 C.F.R. Part 170 for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.